



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CHILD SUPPORT ADVISORY BOARD

Los Angeles County  
Board of Supervisors

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2008

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### Department of Children and Family Services

Susan Jakubowski

### Department of Public Social Services

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### Child Support Services Department

Steven J. Golightly

### Los Angeles Superior Court

David Jetton

## EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

### California Department of Child Support Services

Mary Lawrence

### Franchise Tax Board

Debbie Strong

## CHILD SUPPORT ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MARCH 27, 2008

### Present

3<sup>rd</sup> District, Lucy T. Eisenberg, Esq.,  
Chair

4<sup>th</sup> District, Jean Cohen

4<sup>th</sup> District, Maria Tortorelli, Esq.

5<sup>th</sup> District, Reginald Brass

5<sup>th</sup> District, Susan Speir, Vice Chair

Gene A. Franklin, Sr., CIO

Susan Jakubowski, DCFS

Sylvia Valencia, DPSS

Steven Golightly, Director, CSSD

Mary Lawrence, DCSS

### Guests

Lisa Garrett, CSSD

Gail Juiliano, CSSD

Laura Choate, DCSS

Leslie Hall, DCSS

Linda Sekany, DCSS

### Staff

Lee Millen, Executive Office, BOS

Juanita Smith, Executive Office, BOS

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eisenberg called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. in room 372, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.

Chair Eisenberg announced that Honey Kessler Amado, Esq., is the new 1<sup>st</sup> District appointee to the Child Support Advisory Board.

Chair Eisenberg welcomed back Lee Millen, Executive Office, BOS, as Senior Staff to the Child Support Advisory Board, and Juanita Smith, Staff.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 24, 2008**

On motion of Vice Chair Spier, seconded by Member Cohen and unanimously carried, the minutes of January 24, 2008, were approved as submitted.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO INCLUDE: BUDGET UPDATE; CSSD DIVISIONAL RELOCATIONS; CCSAS AND CSSD OUTREACH; CELL PHONE PROJECT; BEST PRACTICES SUMMIT; COMMISSIONER'S WORKGROUP; PRESS CONFERENCE REGARDING MOST WANTED DELINQUENT PARENTS; POSSIBLE PROJECT(S) TO IMPROVE COLLECTIONS OF CURRENT SUPPORT; AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE ACCUMULATION OF ARREARS**

Steven Golightly, Director, CSSD, reported the following:

- The Governor's proposal exempts Child Support Services from his proposed 10% across the board cuts of other Programs and Departments.
- In partnership with William T Fujioka, CEO, and Miguel Santana, Deputy CEO, CSSD was able to secure additional funding from a greater retention of welfare recruitment monies.
- CEO budget discussions have produced a CSSD budget without anticipated reductions, and an anticipated \$14 million shortfall and service cuts.
- Potential legislative action exists that will attempt to reduce the allocation for child support services to offset cuts in other programs.
- Orange County has gone live on CCSAS, and LA will go live in about seven (7) months.
- Received approval from the State for LA County to move forward with the Cell Phone pilot project which allows for the subpoena of records from the four major cell phone companies. Verizon's response netted about \$60,000 worth of data matches. The other companies are due to respond shortly.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Director Golightly noted that the telephone numbers received from these companies are loaded into their database, and on April 7<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> the Automatic Dialing System for slow or no pays and custodial parents will be initiated. Text messaging communication is another avenue that will be incorporated.

- The State has now authorized Bank of America to receive "pin less" payments from NCPs seeking to pay their support by credit card. A customer with a pin can access the SDU website and make a payment.
- The Best Practices Summit was held on February 7, 2008, (copies of the agenda were provided). This was an internal best practices summit and a sharing of information from office to office.
- A press conference was held on March 25, 2008, on the steps of the Hall of Administration with Supervisor Knabe, 4<sup>th</sup> District, and Steve Cooley, District Attorney, in attendance and all news media present. The identity of child support delinquent NCPs were revealed. As a result, investigators later brought NCPs in

for questioning and others surrendered voluntarily. However, criminal prosecution is a Departmental goal that will continue. Present also was an outpouring of father's rights groups, and an unfavorable editorial appeared in the local newspaper regarding this action.

**DCSS REPORT TO INCLUDE: BUDGET UPDATE ON CCSAS; NUMBER OF PAYMENT CHECKS STILL GOING TO COUNTIES; STATE POLICY REGARDING RETROACTIVE CHARGES IN DEFAULT JUDGMENTS; AND STATUS OF NEW REGULATIONS ON WELFARE REFERRALS**

Mary Lawrence, DCSS, reported that an area of great concern is the EDP budget and ongoing discussions are continuing. Once a workable resolution with the Departments has been reached she will report back on this issue.

Currently 93% of the payments are coming directly to the State Disbursement Unit (SDU), and 7% of the payments are still going to the Ghost Box. An Employer Outreach Campaign will be scheduled in the next couple of months to address this issue. Ms. Lawrence agreed to provide Chair Eisenberg with an update prior to or by the next CSAB meeting.

The resolution for the retroactive charges as well as the Welfare Referral was referred to Bill Otterbeck. Also, Dan Lewis, Chief Counsel, has advised that several interpretations of the statute on retroactive charges may exist.

Chair Eisenberg expressed concern regarding whether the document that Linda Sekany forwarded to Vice Chair Speir is State policy, and if so, then the County is not in compliance. Ms. Lawrence reemphasized that this is an issue that Mr. Otterbeck is discussing with their Legal Office because the statute can be interpreted in two different ways. The document that Vice Chair Speir received was from the Policy office and therefore it seems to be an interpretation of the guidelines and the statute.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Lawrence stated if clarification is needed on a State Policy it is done through the CSS letters that are forwarded to the local child support agencies, or it is done through a CSS information letter that also clarifies policy. However, the Policy and Legal Office will need to conduct its review to determine whether policy clarification is needed.

Ms. Lawrence reported that the Bridge Report is complete and was developed by the Office of Communication. Ms. Lawrence will forward the Bridge Report hyperlink to Lee Millen, Board of Supervisors, for website posting purposes.

As of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, DCSS will have 36 counties on the new statewide system with over 599,000 cases; 33% of the state's caseload will be on the new system.

On March 17, 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger announced the appointment of Mary Ann Miller, Assistant Director, Office of Executive Programs, DCSS. Ms. Miller has extensive experience in managing child support programs in the private sector, and her duties include planning and directing projects for improved performance, State and local child support operations, security activities, audits, compliance, and strategic planning.

Ms. Lawrence advised that a letter claiming compliance with Federal certification requirements has been forwarded, and a response from the Federal Government is expected in 30-45 days regarding California State penalties.

Linda Sekany, DCSS, noted that her duties include Advocate communications, and Advocate meetings convene quarterly. Advocate inquiries are researched by departmental staff with expertise in the respective area.

Following discussion on how to address the issue of arrears and retroactive charges, and how other counties interpret Policy and make default judgments retroactive by date of service or by date of filing, Leslie Hall, DCSS, agreed to research these issues for the proper policy interpretation, and survey counties as to their business practices. Ms. Lawrence will report back on this issue.

Ms. Sekany reported that they will create a work group of LCSA Directors and operational staff with expertise in the COAP process to discuss how the program can be better streamlined. The COAP Program will continue to exist, and NCPs will still be able to apply for a compromise. An issue that will be studied is the inability of NCPs with multiple cases to apply for COAP.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Sekany reported that legislation is required to extend the program past July 1, 2008. Two sets of Trailer Bill language are before the Legislature for a two year extension or for permanent implementation. Hearings are ongoing.

In response to Lisa Garrett, Ms. Sekany noted that applications under \$5,000 were not given any more relaxed criteria, and once the legislative process is complete it is expected that all LCSAs will be able to accept applications for Arrears under \$5,000.

In response to Vice Chair Speir, Ms. Sekany stated that foster care is not addressed in regular COAP services. However, Laura Choate reported that if NCPs do not qualify for family reunification they can apply for Governmental Arrears. Following discussion, Ms. Choate requested names of individuals who have refused applications based on foster care arrears.

Ms. Choate advised that a formal request for clarification on this issue could be initiated. Vice Chair Speir agreed to submit a formal request and provide a copy to Director Golightly and Chief Deputy Director Garrett. Also, Ms. Choate noted that COAP training is offered upon request, a follow-up training will be scheduled that will clarify both the County and State perspective, and an Advocate training could also be scheduled.

In response to Vice Chair Speir regarding a return of County budgeted operational funds invested in COAP, Ms. Choate advised that currently there has been no discussion on changing the Federal distribution pattern.

### **REVIEW AND DISCUSS PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Chair Eisenberg stated that in addition to documents that they received in the mail, Gail Juiliano has provided an Order Calculation Method (February) and a Customer Service Report (December) on Call Center inquiries for their discussion. Chair Eisenberg suggested that since the CSAB is now on a bi-monthly schedule the reports can be distributed bi-monthly. Gail Juiliano discussed both reports in detail, and explained that the zero order on the Order Calculation Method report includes Medicaid, SSI, incarcerated, disabled, aided, or parents that reside together to establish paternity. Ms. Juiliano will provide copies of both reports to Members Amado, Leftwich, and Murrell.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Juiliano advised that a Private Order is a Family Law Order and it is usually not made payable to FDU or the Department until after a conversion.

Director Golightly advised that arrears collections continue to trend upwards.

### **PIP PLANFOR 2007/08 – GAIL JULIANO**

Ms. Juiliano reported that CSSD is working in collaboration with the Public Defender's Office on NCPs sentenced to prison and modifying the order at the time of incarceration. In effect, the modification reduces the order to zero during the incarceration period. Director Golightly noted that CSSD has been able to assist the Public Defender's Office with funding to expand their legal staff to address this issue.

In response to Vice Chair Speir, Director Golightly noted that CSSD must have current support at 50% before the State will consider removing the PIP action. The following four major goals are required: 1) Successful conversion to CCSAS; 2) Improvement in current support percentage; 3) Improvement in arrears percentage; 4) and Enhancement of customer service. Each of the goals has a minimum of two strategies with current support having eight strategies.

A very formal process exists in CCSAS with a specialized team that monitors all movements and goals for conversion. There are approximately 45 individual reports that staff reviews routinely to ensure data is correct going into conversion.

In October 2007, LA County embarked on a closing project which was to aggressively review and close as many appropriate cases as possible. In the closing project there were approximately 80,000 cases that required review. To date staff has reviewed 30,000 cases and have closed 12,000 cases. Also, there are five lists that total about

45,000 cases which include delinquent or never paid in a 12 month period that will involve a manual Locate.

Director Golightly noted that he has directed his Division Chiefs to identify the highest TMSO's in their respective offices who are not paying and assign those cases to attorneys, not to CSOs. Legal staff will conduct reviews to determine if a modification is in order or a case closure.

A review of the Customer Service and Current Support Strategies followed (copy on file). Ms. Juiliano suggested that the CSAB could review current support in May and the other goals in July.

### **UPDATE ON DEFAULT REDUCTION PROJECT**

Lisa Garrett, Chief Deputy Director, reported that this project is to encourage the participation of the non custodial parent in the child support case. The project is rolled out in the following three phases: 1) Take Advantage Now flyer has a pre-selected appointment time for clients. In November 2007, 545 appointments were scheduled and 57 NCPs made contact; of these, 17% were resolved; 2) 705 Postcards were mailed to every presumed income case with an appointment date of February 4, 2008. As a result, 76 NCPs made contact (11%), and of these 26% were resolved; and 3) 622 letters were mailed indicating the consequences of not participating in the child support action. A total of 75 NCPs made contact, and of these 33 percent were resolved, 16 stipulations were written, and nine provided information that led to case closure.

Lori Cruz, Deputy Director, will have her staff track the actual numbers and groups reached by this project. Also, work is continuing on an outbound calling campaign. Further data results will be provided in May.

### **DATA FROM CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

Gail Juiliano reported that there were 28 interviews observed in the Divisions and 16 surveys completed, 11 were completed by the custodial party and the remaining by the non custodial party. The Data From Customer Satisfaction Survey identified the reason for a visit, the length of time waiting to be seen, and whether or not they were informed of the estimated wait time. Also, a staff evaluation was conducted in five (5) categories, including a request for facility and bathroom comments.

Director Golightly noted that he was concerned of consistency in the offices, however, the Survey has provided feedback for corrective action.

### **UPDATE ON JUDGMENT DEBTOR EXAMINATION PROJECT**

Lisa Garrett reported that this project was designed to notify NCPs of non payment

and request an office visit or court appointment to obtain a new wage assignment.

The project has netted \$240,000 in collections and 900 wage assignments issued from NCP data. This has become a standard operations project.

As of December 31, 2007, the Interstate Division has collected \$46,000, with 3,200 more cases to review and 355 cases set for court.

In response to Chair Eisenberg regarding whether it would be useful to the CSAB to see the percentage of cases with wage assignments as a criteria for over all improvement, Ms. Garrett agreed to provide the CSAB with wage assignment data for the last 12 months.

### **GOALS FOR CRIMINAL ARREST WARRANT PROJECT**

Lisa Garrett reported that the goals for the Child Support Arrest Warrant Project are to: 1) Increase the total collections of the unit by 50%; 2) Increase the number of referrals to the Criminal Prosecution Division by 50%; 3) Increase the number of criminal filings and arraignments by 50%; and 4) Reduce the number of outstanding bench and arrest warrants in collaboration with the DA Investigators. However, one of the challenges is that staff is not empowered to serve arrest and bench warrants.

Director Golightly worked with Supervisor Knabe's Office to address this issue and acquired a \$500,000 grant with matching federal funds to fund a project to hire investigators. As a result, budgeted CSSD items include 4 investigators, 2 Senior Investigators, 1 Supervising Investigator, ½ of a Lieutenant, and a Senior Typist Clerk.

The investigators' initial work netted about 1,200 cases with outstanding warrants. As of March 25, 2008, 187 warrants were cleared, 70 defendants were arrested, 76 were cited by the District Attorney Investigator, 52 defendants with outstanding warrants were walk-ins, and 1 person was cited by another law enforcement agency. If an NCP is arrested, the DA Investigator can make an arrest at the local police station.

Director Golightly reported that outstanding cases will continue to appear on CSSD's website, data updates will ensue, and County Departments will have access to this website.

Ms. Garrett agreed to provide a written summary of goals to the CSAB. She detailed the 10 Most Wanted List, and reported that 3 persons have been arrested and 1 person surrendered. Prosecution will continue against those with the ability to pay.

### **UPDATE ON PROJECT TO TRACK LAWSUITS IN WHICH NCP (WHO OWES ARREARS) IS AWARDED DAMAGES**

Lisa Garrett reported that as in the case of the County of Sacramento where NCP

damages received can pay child support arrears, CSSD has reached an agreement with the County Counsel's Office to notify CSSD when a lawsuit settlement is reached so that a CSSD lawsuit can be initiated against the NCP for child support collections.

**MATTERS NOT POSTED ON THE AGENDA (to be presented and placed on a future Agenda)**

There were none.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Shannon Miles, President and Executive Producer of Mile Stone Productions, reported that she is currently in pre-production on a television series regarding child support delinquent parents. The focus of the show is on the most egregious offenders who have an existing arrest warrant. The elements of the show include the fugitive parent and his/her history. In addition, their budget provides for private investigators to continue working cases previously worked on by Los Angeles County District Attorney Investigators. Confidentiality and privacy issues are of concern and will be addressed. "Justice for Children" is the working title.

The show will not highlight CSSD and DCSS business practices, rather the focus will be on delinquent parents and their negative affect on the custodial parent and family. The networks have expressed interest and Maricopa County has agreed to participate. The show will offer LA County edit review to ensure that LA is reflected in a positive light. CSSD will be asked to inquire whether the NCP would like to speak with production staff.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Miles noted that further communication with CSSD is necessary, and the goal today is to outline the show to Director Golightly and the CSAB. Los Angeles could be the flagship for this television series.

Ms. Garrett advised that following a conversation with Ms. Miles, she contacted Supervisor Knabe's Office and did not receive any interest in pursuing a television series. Approval by the Board of Supervisors is required.

Director Golightly agreed to speak with Ms. Miles on this project and report back to the CSAB.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Eisenberg declared the meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.